

MY BOY, DO YOU EVER WONDER WHY YOU LOVE SMOOTHIES SO MUCH?

IT'S A DOOZY.

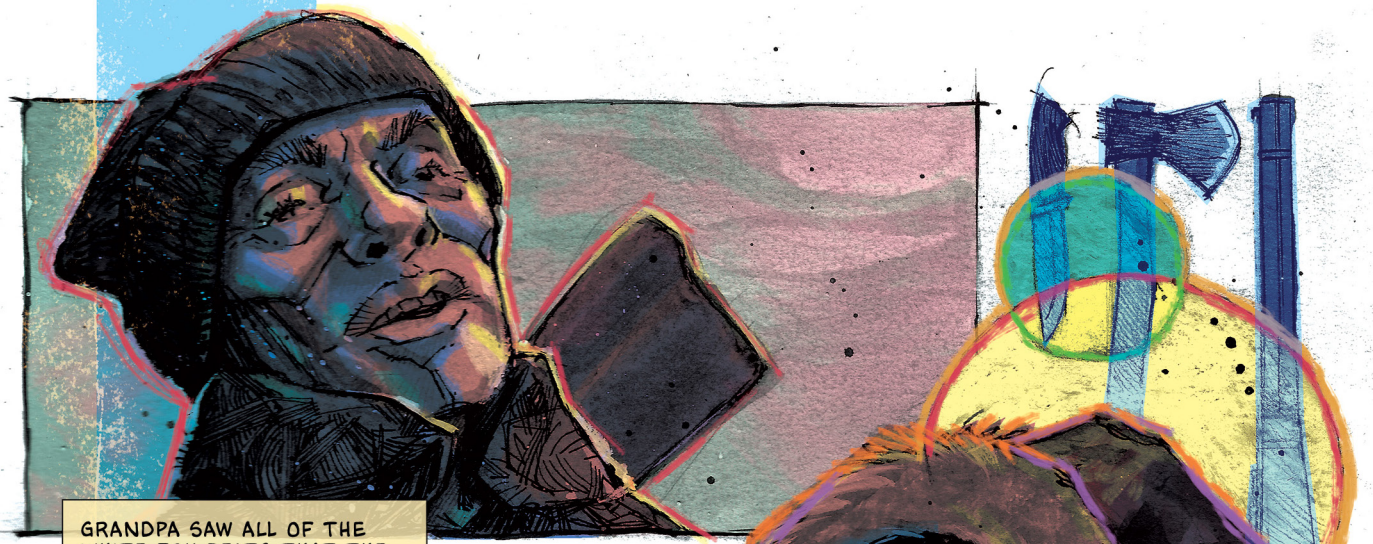
GRANDPA TOLD US THIS STORY IN *TLIHO* (DOGRIB) WHEN MY HAIR WAS BLACK, BEFORE YOU WERE BORN. IT WAS TRANSLATED BY YOUR *EHTS!*, ROSA.

EVERY TIME I SEE YOU DOWN ONE OF MY FAMOUS SMOOTHIES, I ALWAYS THINK TO TELL YOU A STORY OF OUR FAMILY,

ABOUT THE VERY FIRST SMOOTHIE YOUR GREAT-GRANDFATHER, *WEDZEBAH*, EVER SLURPED.

A LONG TIME AGO, GRANDPA WAS HUNTING WITH HIS DOG TEAM, WHICH WAS HELPING HIM HEAD WAY UP NORTH INTO INUIT TERRITORY. GRANDPA AND HIS DOG TEAM, WHICH WAS ALL HALF-WOLF, WERE HUNTING FOR CARIBOU OR *EKWO*, AND THEY WERE LOOKING FOR WHITE FOX. AS THEY TRAVELLED FARTHER NORTH, GRANDPA AND HIS DOGS COULD SEE A SNOWSTORM FAST APPROACHING.

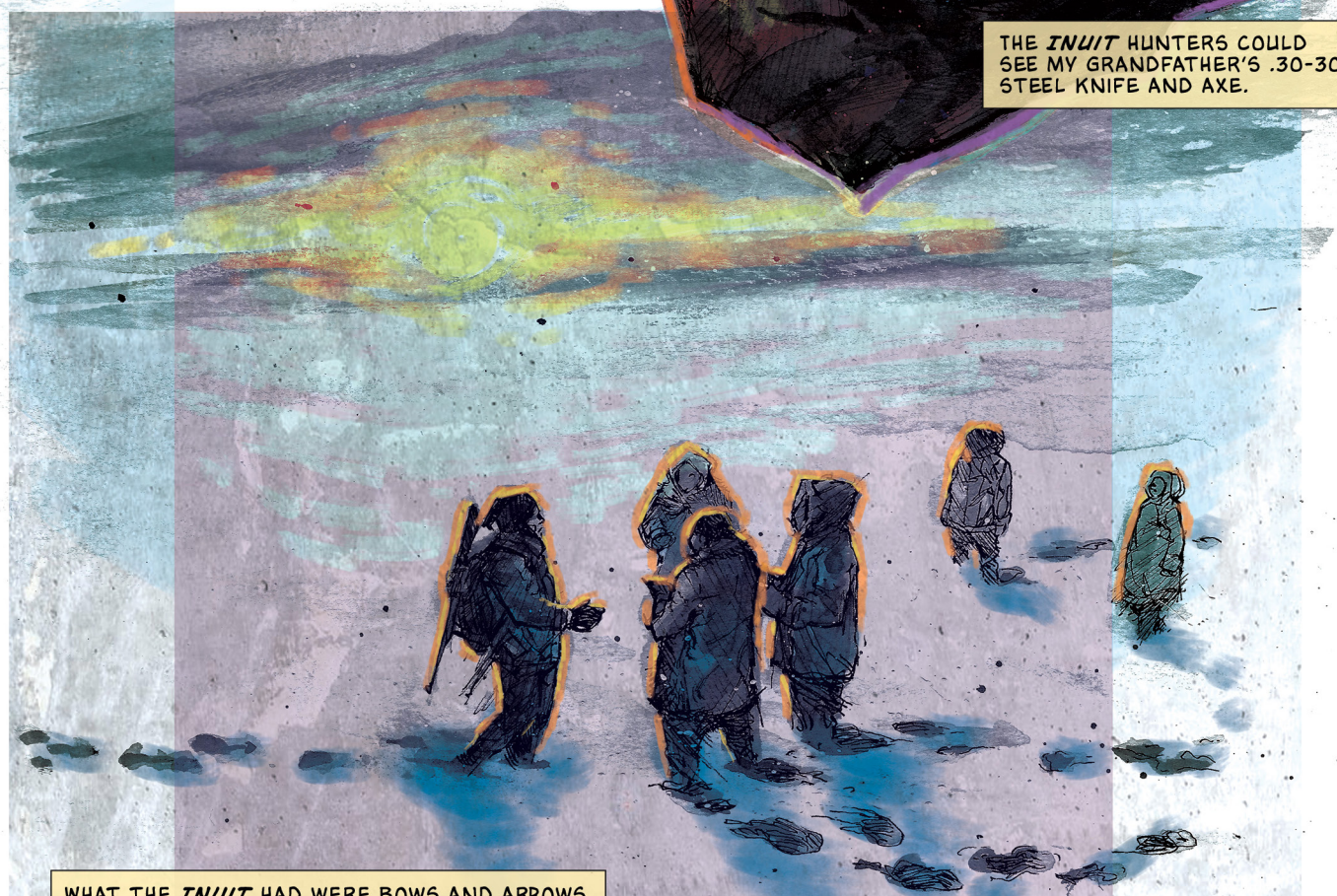
TO THEIR SURPRISE, *EHTSÈE* AND HIS DOG TEAM WERE MET BY A FAMILY OF INUIT HUNTERS WITH THEIR DOG TEAMS, WHO WERE ALSO TRYING TO HUNT FOR CARIBOU AND WHITE FOX. ALL OF THEM COULD SEE THAT THE STORM WAS ALMOST UPON THEM.




GRANDPA SAW ALL OF THE WHITE FOX PELTS THAT THE INUIT HAD IN THEIR SLEIGHS.



THE INUIT HUNTERS COULD SEE MY GRANDFATHER'S .30-30, STEEL KNIFE AND AXE.



WHAT THE INUIT HAD WERE BOWS AND SPEARS, HE SAID. THE HEAD OF THE INUIT HUNTERS EXPLAINED THROUGH SIGN LANGUAGE THAT THEY HAD TO MOVE QUICKLY TO BUILD AN IGLOO. MY GRANDFATHER WAS INVITED TO PLAY HANDGAMES AND EAT WITH THEM.



GRANDPA SAID THAT HE WAS AMAZED AT HOW QUICKLY THE INUIT COULD MAKE SHELTERS, NOT ONLY FOR THEMSELVES BUT FOR THEIR DOGS. *EHTSÉE* KNEW HE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO JOIN THEM. HE WANTED TO SEE HOW THEY LIVED *INSIDE* THE IGLOO THEY HAD JUST MADE. HE ALSO WANTED WHITE FOX FURS FOR HIS RETURN HOME.

THE *INUIT* HUNTERS BUILT WALLS OF SNOW FOR THEIR DOGS AND FED THEM AND MY GRANDPA'S DOGS FROZEN FISH AS THE STORM OVERTOOK THEM.

INSIDE THE IGLOO, GRANDPA SAID, THE *INUIT* HUNTERS AND THEIR FAMILIES WENT RIGHT TO WORK. THEY HAD FOOD, A STONE ALTAR FOR FIRE. THEY WERE *SAFE*. THEY WERE *WARM*.

THROUGH SIGN LANGUAGE, THE *INUIT* SHOWED MY GRANDPA HOW THEY PLAYED THEIR VERSION OF *HANDGAMES*. IT'S A GAMBLING GAME THAT INVOLVES HIDING A SMALL OBJECT OR OBJECTS AND THE OPPOSING TEAM HAVING TO GUESS YOUR FINAL MOVE. THE HUNTERS WANTED MY GRANDPA'S GUN, HIS KNIFE, HIS AXE. HE WANTED THEIR WHITE FOX FURS. MY GRANDPA WAS ALSO HUNGRY. HE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO WAIT OUT THE STORM WITH THE INUIT AND PLAY THE GAME.

THEY BEGAN TO PLAY AND, *IMMEDIATELY*, MY GRANDPA FELT THE SPIRIT HANDS OF THE HUNTERS REACHING INTO HIS *THOUGHTS*. THEY WERE USING THEIR *MEDICINE POWER* TO LISTEN AND SEE WHAT *EHTSÉE'S* NEXT MOVES WERE IN THE GAMBLING GAME. GRANDPA USED *HIS MEDICINE* TO PUSH THEIR HANDS AWAY.

THEY PLAYED. REMEMBER: GRANDPA WANTED THEIR FURS. THEY WANTED HIS WEAPONS AND TOOLS.

THE MISTAKE THE *INUIT* MADE WAS THEY FED *EHTSÉE* MUSKOX ENTRAILS. HE SAID WHEN HE SQUEEZED THE JUICE INTO HIS MOUTH, IT WAS *DELICIOUS*, AND HE GAINED THE STRENGTH OF THE LAND THROUGH THE MUSKOX. IT REALLY HELPED HIM AS HE WAS SO HUNGRY. IT HELPED HIS *MEDICINE*.

HE LET THEM WIN THE AXE AND KNIFE. HE KNEW IF HE LOST THE .30-30 IT WOULD NOT BE GOOD. HE NEEDED THAT TO LIVE AND GET HOME.

AS THE STORM PASSED OVER AND THE GAME FINISHED, THEY EXITED THE IGLOO TOGETHER AND WERE HAPPY THEY HAD BEEN ABLE TO MEET EACH OTHER. THEIR DOGS WERE ALSO SAFE AND READY TO GO HOME.

MY GRANDPA SAID WHEN THEY LEFT THE IGLOO TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES, THEY DID NOT TURN THEIR BACKS ON EACH OTHER.

JUST TO BE SAFE, THEY WALKED THEIR DOG TEAMS AWAY FACING EACH OTHER UNTIL ARROWS AND BULLETS COULD NOT FIND A HOME.

YOUR GREAT-GRANDFATHER SAID HE RACED ALL THE WAY HOME WITH FURS AND HIS .30-30 AND A NEW LOVE FOR MUSKOX ENTRAILS AND THE SWEET JUICE THEREIN.

IT WAS A GREAT CHRISTMAS, HE SAID.

THEY CALLED PIERRE WASHIE "WEDZEBAH" FOR "BIG EARS" OR "ONE WHO LISTENS."



HE PULLED A SMALL BIRD OF FIRE OUT OF A STUTTERING BOY'S MOUTH AND THE BOY NEVER STUTTERED AGAIN. MANY PEOPLE SAW THIS LITTLE BIRD OF FIRE DOWN BY MARION LAKE WHEN HE DID THIS. THAT BOY IS NOW A GRANDFATHER AND EVERY NIGHT WHEN THEY GIVE THANKS FOR THEIR FOOD, THEY ALWAYS PRAY AND GIVE THANKS FOR OUR GRANDPA.



SO, MY BOY, NOW YOU KNOW WHY YOU LIKE SMOOTHIES SO MUCH. WHEN I SIP MY SMOOTHIE, I ALWAYS PRETEND IT'S MUSKOX ENTRAILS AND WE ARE SIPPING THE STRENGTH OF THE LAND TO HELP US MAKE OUR WAY IN THE WORLD TOGETHER. REMEMBER: A TRUE NORTHERNER ALWAYS LEAVES EACH PERSON AND EACH PLACE BETTER THAN THEY FOUND THEM. WE ARE HERE TO HELP EACH OTHER.



I LOVE YOU AND I AM SO PROUD TO BE YOUR DAD. YOU CARRY THE STRENGTH OF YOUR MOTHER AND ME AND YOU ALSO CARRY THE STRENGTH OF OUR ANCESTORS. WE MUST ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL TO THE INUIT WHO HELPED GRANDPA IN THE STORM. THIS IS WHY YOUR MIDDLE NAME IS INULSUK. INUUSIQ NASHALIK ASKED US TO CARRY HIS NAME FORWARD BEFORE HE PASSED. WE MET HIM WHEN WE WERE IN PANGNIRTUNG, NUNAVUT.

WHEN I SAY YOUR FULL NAME EDZAZII INULSUK WAH-SHEE VAN CAMP, YOUR NAME EDZAZII MEANS "MARROW" IN TEJCHO BECAUSE MARROW IS THE HEART OF THE BONE AND YOU ARE THE HEART OF OUR FAMILY. INULSUK HONOURS THE GREAT INUUSIQ NASHALIK WHO HUNTED AND PROVIDED FOR MANY FAMILIES WHILE HE WAS ALIVE. WAH-SHEE IS OUR FAMILY NAME AND WE GET THAT BECAUSE YOUR GREAT-GRANDPA KNEW A SHORTCUT THROUGH THE MACKENZIE MOUNTAINS THAT LED THE TLICHO TO THE CARIBOU. YOUR GREAT-GRANDFATHER WAS MOUNTAIN DENE BUT HE WAS ADOPTED BY THE TEJCHO AFTER HE LOST HIS FAMILY TO SICKNESS. VAN CAMP IS OUR FAMILY NAME TO HONOUR THE MAN WHO RAISED ME: JACK VAN CAMP. HE IS MY FATHER AND I LOVE HIM SO MUCH: THAT'S YOUR GRANDPA JACK. HIS BIRTHDAY IS DECEMBER 20.

THESE ARE A FEW OF OUR FAMILY STORIES AND I WILL TELL YOU ALL I KNOW AS WE GROW TOGETHER. MAHSI CHO FOR CHOOSING US AS YOUR PARENTS. YOU ARE OUR WISH AND DREAM COME TRUE. I LOVE YOU.

SIGNED,
"DADDY" OR "SETA" :)
ALSO KNOWN AS RICHARD VAN CAMP